

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, MARCH 27, 1910.—Copyright, 1910, by the Sun Printing and Publishing Association.

LETTING THE CRIMINAL GO

ALL FOUND WITH SUSPENDED SENTENCES AND PAROLES.

Attitude of Judges in This City Toward Persons Convicted of Crime Criticized by Assistant District Attorney Nott in Albany Address—Specimen Cases.

THE SUN of August 9 last published a list of cases in which sentence was suspended by the Judges of General Sessions during the first seven months of 1909. The total was 678. If the same rate had been continued during the rest of the year the number of suspended sentences would have been 1,194. As a matter of fact the rate decreased after the figures were published, so that the actual total was 659, which was 179 less than the number for 1908.

This fact was noted in a paper read by Assistant District Attorney Charles C. Nott, Jr., at the annual meeting of the Association of District Attorneys of the State held at Albany. Mr. Nott quoted these figures among other facts which he presented with the purpose of showing that the custom of suspending sentence and its complement, the probation system, was an incompetent means of dealing with crime in the county of New York.

The fault lies, said Mr. Nott, in the attitude of the courts toward persons convicted of crime.

"The idea seems to prevail," he declared, "that the object of punishment is the reformation of the individual and that the deterring effect on others from the commission of crime is only an incident thereto, and is of such relative unimportance that it should not be allowed to interfere with the main object to be attained, the reformation of the individual."

"The administration of our prisons, the manner and method of dealing with persons about to be sentenced, the sentences that may be imposed, all show this tendency. In our prisons the stripes have been abandoned for first offenders, the prisoners' heads are no longer shaved, the lockstep is abolished. Prisoners serving indeterminate sentences are uniformly discharged on the completion of their minimum sentence, regardless of the nature or heinousness of their crime, if only their individual conduct in prison has been satisfactory."

Mr. Nott did not deprecate the use of all possible means to reform the individual when it was not contrary to "the main object of punishment—the safeguarding of the community by deterring others from the commission of crime." But during the last eight years the parole system has grown.

"The term suspended sentence had but little meaning to the majority of the bar," said Mr. Nott, "and was almost unknown to the public. At the present time it is so to say that it is as well recognized by the public as a feature of our criminal administration as is a plea of guilty or a verdict of acquittal."

The figures for suspended sentences for the last six years are as follows: 1904, 1,000; 1905, 1,200; 1906, 1,300; 1907, 1,400; 1908, 1,500; 1909, 1,600.

For the sake of argument Mr. Nott assumed that the average maximum term for which the defendants could have been sentenced was six years and that at the end of the year 1909 there were 4,200 convicted criminals still on parole in this county.

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A FLEET OF DREADNOUGHTS

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In That Year Germany May Have Seventeen Large Vessels—German Dreadnoughts Bigger Than Was Supposed—Trouble in Rebuilding Russia's Navy.

LONDON, March 16.—The British naval estimates for 1910-11, just published, provide for an expenditure of \$200,000,000, the largest sum that has ever been voted at one time for Britain's first line of defense and an increase of \$27,500,000 over the year 1909-10.

The sum allotted for new construction is \$100,000,000, and the new ships include five battleships, five cruisers, twenty destroyers and some submarines. These ships do not include the four contingent dreadnoughts belonging to the current program, nor the two battleships to be constructed in England for Australia and New Zealand.

Between April 1, 1908, and March 31, 1910, the following ships will have been completed and become available for service: Five battleships (Ternaire, Colingwood, St. Vincent, Superb and Vanguard), two unarmored cruisers (Boadicea and Bellona), nine destroyers, six first class torpedo boats and sixteen submarines.

This year will witness a great boom in shipbuilding in England. Not for twenty years since the naval defense act will builders of warships be so busy. The vessels which will be under construction between now and the end of the next financial year are as follows: Seventeen dreadnoughts, twenty-three small cruisers, seventy destroyers and twenty-five submarines.

Of the destroyers four are for the Argentine navy. All the other ships are destined for the British navy or the Colonial squadrons. The total cost of these ships will amount to over \$250,000,000, and their construction will provide employment for 200,000 men for two years.

The first Lord of the Admiralty in introducing the new estimates in the House of Commons said that two of the five new battleships would be laid down in dock yards in January, 1911, and the three others which are to be put to contract would, he hoped, be laid down in the same month. It would be completed by January, 1912.

The two ships being built for Australia and New Zealand would be completed by the summer of 1912. At that time, said Mr. McKenna, in addition to the Colonial dreadnoughts there would be twenty British dreadnoughts in home waters and five new ships of the 1909-10 programme would be approaching completion.

The new estimates will cost \$175,000,000 for the British navy. Not including the old "Hollands" there are fifty-three British submarines in commission.

Questioned regarding the Government's estimate of the two power standard, Mr. McKenna replied that the standard which the Government had in view when framing the estimates was such a strength as would secure Britain's safety in the event of a general war, and that the German navy, the three great powers nearest to Britain in strength were so equal that it did not matter which two were taken into consideration.

Germany, he said, if her construction programme was accelerated, might have seventeen large ships that could be made available for war in 1912, and twenty-one in 1913. Happily after 1913 the German programme provided for the construction of not more than two large ships a year.

The Daily Express has discovered that English opinion has been very much misled regarding the strength of the German navy. The facts it publishes concern chiefly the tonnage of Germany's battleships and armored cruisers of the Dreadnought type.

The displacements of the ten German Dreadnought battleships now completed or under construction, says the Express, have been understated in the German Navy's Westfalen, now in commission, and the Rheinland and Posen, now under trial, the difference is not great. The other six battleships now under construction will carry a new pattern 12 inch gun superior to anything now in existence, and it is in the case of these vessels that the greatest error has been made.

The principal reference books in this country all credit these ships with a displacement of 19,000 tons. As a matter of fact each of them will displace 22,500 tons. It is pointed out that of the completed British Dreadnought battleships one is of 17,000 tons, three are of 16,000 and three are of 15,250. Of those under construction none exceeds 19,000 tons in displacement.

The Express gives a table showing that the total tonnage of the ten German Dreadnought battleships completed or under construction is not 185,275, as computed by the official publications of the British Navy League, but 208,000, an increase of 22,725 tons, more than equal to one ship of the latest type.

Russia's scheme for the resurrection of her navy works out better in theory than in practice. It progresses so slowly that the Dreadnoughts now being built in Russian yards are threatened with obsolescence before they are launched owing to the lack of facilities for the turning out of home built battleships.

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